



# News Release

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**Release Date:** August 17, 2004

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**Release No:** 04-62 FRESNO

**Internet Address:** <http://www.sba.gov/news>

## **SBA Breaks All-Time Loan Record** *Agency Has Already Surpassed 2003 Loan Numbers*

### ***LOANS TO VALLEY SMALL BUSINESSES REFLECT SIGNIFICANT INCREASES ALSO***

**WASHINGTON** – U.S. Small Business Administration Administrator Hector V. Barreto announced today that, with almost two full months still remaining in the fiscal year, the SBA has already backed more loans in its 7(a) and 504 programs than ever before in its 51-year history.

As of August 6 – eight weeks before the end of fiscal year 2004 – the SBA's 7(a) loan program had guaranteed 67,493 loans in fiscal year 2004, more than the record 67,306 7(a) loans made in all of fiscal year 2003. In addition, the agency has backed 6,974 loans through its 504 program, surpassing the 2003 record of 6,863. The 2004 fiscal year ends on September 30. When compared to the same time period last year, these record-breaking numbers represent dramatic increases: 23 percent for 7(a) and 27 percent for 504.

"In 2003, the SBA set all-time records in its two major loan programs. It took us less than a year to break those records," Barreto said. "I am proud that our loan programs, and especially our flagship 7(a), are growing and reaching out to more small businesses than ever before. I am hopeful that we can continue this trend, particularly if the President's proposal to make 7(a) self-sustaining is approved by Congress.

"Breaking records like this is about more than making history," Barreto added. "This is good news for America's small business owners. It means that we are making a real difference in the lives of more and more entrepreneurs, and that they are going on to make a real difference in our economy. Over the last 11 months, American farms and businesses have created 1.5 million new jobs. We know that when the economy is growing and jobs are being created, small businesses are always in the lead. They are the engine of our economy, and I am proud to be able to work with President Bush to help create an environment in which they are succeeding."

Not only has the SBA broken overall lending records, but it has also already exceeded 2003 numbers for some of the fastest growing segments of the small business community. With almost two months still remaining in the 2004 fiscal year, the SBA has already surpassed the total 2003 number of loans to African Americans, Hispanics, Asian Americans, women and rural entrepreneurs. When comparing with the same time period last year, the increases are even more dramatic. Loan guarantees to African Americans, Hispanics, and Asian Americans are 30 percent ahead of their totals at the same date last year. Loans to women are up by 25 percent, and rural loans are 11 percent ahead.

**As of August 6th, the Fresno District Office - which services the 15 counties in Central California - has assisted 945 businesses with loans, a 12.3% increase for the same period last year. Loan totals for the Fresno District Office last year also set new records. Totals include a 9.3% increase in regular 7(a) program loans and a 29.2% increase in 504 economic development loans over the previous year.**

*For more information about all of the SBA's programs for small businesses, visit the SBA's extensive Web site at <http://www.sba.gov>.*